

Her Guardian

By FRANK H. SWEET

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"Then you think you have everything you will need, may need?"

"Everything? Oh, Mr. Barclay! The girl's eyes were misty with tears."

"What makes you so thoughtful of me? At school there was no other girl who had such beautiful and dainty things."

And it was not money, for many of them were wealthy. They said I had such exquisite taste, and it was not I at all, but you who procured them and who induced me into the way of wanting such things, and it used to be the same before I went to school and has been so since I graduated and came home. You are always influencing me toward what is most beautiful in life and then bestowing it on me, so lavishly."

Mr. Barclay's hand moved uneasily among the papers.

"I promised your father"—he began, when she interrupted him with an imperious motion of her hand.

"Yes, yes, I know, but most guardians would have been satisfied with keeping a general oversight and paying the bills. You have been my most intimate friend from the time my father died, when I was only twelve. Why, laughing, and her voice quivering a little, "I have told you my secrets and love affairs as few of the girls I know tell their own mothers. It has seemed perfectly natural. You were interested in them, or appeared to be, and never requested me to keep away from the boys. Indeed, I think you always favored my going with them, only you were careful to inquire about their habits."

She was in a reminiscent mood, and, though her eyes were still moist and tender, her lips were half parted in amused recollection.

"What a lot of boys I must have told you about, Mr. Barclay," she went on, "all those of my early school days, then the ones I met at college and now the young men who have been calling on me during my six months here. You know about the ones I like best and those I just tolerate."

"I am afraid you are a sad girl, Ellen," he said.

"Yes, I am afraid I am," she agreed, readily, her face becoming clouded.

"But what can I do? The boys seem nice, and I like them, but some way when I come to know them better, they all fall a little short, and I have to let them go. I have felt awfully sorry for some of them, but there was no other way. Two or three who are coming here now are really talented and will make successful men, I am sure, but I have a premonition what my verdict will be. They almost reach my ideal, the lurking mischief again returning to her eyes, "but not quite."

"Perhaps your ideal is too high."

"Perhaps," demurely, "but you fixed it for me, and you have made it so much of my being that I cannot stoop to a lower one now."

"Well, I am glad. The ideal will come along some day, and then there will be no mistake. Are your trunks all packed?"

"Yes, I can get ready in a few minutes, and there is over an hour. That is why I came down to have a last talk with you, Mr. Barclay."

He winced ever so slightly. She had always called him uncle until the past few months. Now it was Mr. Barclay. She was older, of course, and was growing away from him. And she would be absent for two whole years. What would it be like when she returned?

"Yes," he said, his voice a little dreary with the thought, "I was waiting for you to come down. It will be a long, delightful two years for you, and I hope you will enjoy them thoroughly. Mrs. Carruth has the reputation of being the best chaperon in the country. She will take you everywhere, and you will meet nice people. I will give you letters to some I wish you to know. Dr. Laurens is going abroad on the same steamer. I hear, so you will have a chance to meet him after all. I was sorry for his peremptory summons to the hospital that day I invited him here, but of course his professional duties should come first. I shall ask him to look you up and request Mrs. Carruth to present him. Dr. Laurens is one of the most brilliant and noble men I know and is making himself an enviable reputation, and he is only three years older than you are, Ellen."

"Don't, Mr. Barclay!" she implored, with sudden pain in her voice. "Please do not talk that way. You mean well, but I do not like it just now. This is the only home I remember much about, and I am going away for a long, long time. Let us not talk of other people. When I left college I looked forward to coming home and living quietly, as we did before I went away, when we read books and played chess and talked over things. But you thought I should go into society and meet people, so you left your books and took me everywhere and introduced me to everybody. I think I must have met all the noted people, especially the young men, in the whole city and surrounding country. And now I am to go abroad to meet people and people and people! I suppose it is for the best, and my good, but I am not brilliant enough to appreciate it. I—I should have liked the chess and books so much better."

His face was turned away from her now, but his voice was steady.

"Yes, it is for the best, Ellen. It is right for a girl to marry, and she should know men before she is ready to make a choice. Some girls are ac-

quainted with only a few, and the best of these is her standard of mankind. Perhaps just outside her limited area there are a hundred who are stronger and nobler in every way. This girl has been cheated. I do not want your life like that. I have done the best for you in the way of an education. As a conscientious guardian could I do less for the rest of your life? It is not that I want you to go, Ellen; it is not that I have any inclination to be a match-maker. It is because because I can do nothing else, being myself." He looked at his watch abruptly. "Twenty minutes," he suggested.

"So late? Well, I will go and get ready."

At the door she paused, looking back.

"You must excuse my talk about your liberty, Mr. Barclay," she said wistfully. "But—but I could not go away without saying something."

Halfway up the stairs she paused again. She had forgotten the letters of introduction, and it would be more convenient to put them in her bag before starting.

When she re-entered the library Mr. Barclay's face was buried in his arms upon the desk. He was tired, she thought, and perhaps grieving a little at her going away.

It was not until she reached the desk and was about to pick up the letters that he noticed her presence and raised his head with a quick, surprised motion. His eyes were frank, unguarded, his lips trembling.

She gazed at him a moment; then her womanly instinct in a flash comprehended.

"Oh, Mr. Barclay—Robert—do you?"

But he had controlled himself by a great effort.

"Forget this, Ellen, forever," he interrupted harshly. "I was weak for a moment. I thought I was alone, and you misunderstood."

But her face was radiant.

"I have been misunderstanding you for months, Robert," she said softly. "But not now. It was all in your eyes. Have you never thought why I was unable to find my ideal? I didn't know my own heart then, but I always compared the boys and the young men with you, and they fell short. I know now that I have loved you for years, since I first went to college, but I have not fully realized it until within the past few months, and, Robert, I have been so—so unhappy at your—thoughtfulness of me."

"It was the only thing I could do," he groaned. "I was afraid of myself, and—and I am so old, Ellen."

"Only fifteen years older than I am," she said happily. "I shall unpack my trunks."

Once more he tried to command himself, to summon the mask to his face, but he was too weak. He held out his arms.

Crushed the Lawyer.

Some years ago in Alabama one of the most talented lawyers practicing in the south was the late Colonel Bragg, but he had a peevish temper.

Not only did Colonel Bragg's disposition involve him from time to time in serious differences with his colleagues, but it also led him to break off amicable relations with a Judge Robinson, a most estimable jurist, who while presiding over a suit in which Bragg was interested had by his decision incurred the resentment of the advocate. So for a long time the colonel declined even to speak to the judge save when it was absolutely necessary in the course of business.

Finally, however, his better nature getting the upper hand, Colonel Bragg determined to apologize to Judge Robinson and endeavor to effect a renewal of their former comparatively pleasant relations. Meeting the judge one afternoon on the steps of the statehouse, he impulsively thrust out his hand and said:

"See here, judge, let's be friends again. This thing has gone on long enough."

"Why—er—Bragg," asked the judge in the meekest and mildest way imaginable, "what's the matter?"

"Simply this, judge," continued the fiery Bragg—"I admire you so immensely that I cannot for my life be content to remain on bad terms any longer. I felt that I must speak to you."

"Why—er—Bragg," piped the judge in the thinnest of voices, a well feigned look of astonishment on his face—why—er—Bragg, haven't you been speaking to me?"

At this the lawyer wilted.—Lippincott's.

Continued.

It is said that, although the celebrated advocate, Lord Erskine, was sometimes jocular and occasionally a little unfair in his treatment of witnesses, no man was better able than he to make them realize the foolishness or utter irrelevance of their replies without giving offense. At one time a witness obstinately refused to be sworn in the usual manner, but stated that, although he would not "kiss the book," he would "hold up his hand" and swear. Erskine asked him what reason he had for preferring such an eccentric way to the ordinary method.

"It is written in the book of Revelation," replied the obstinate man, "that the angel standing on the sea held up his hand."

"That is very true," said Erskine, with a smile, "but I can hardly see how that applies to your case. In the first place, you certainly are not an angel, and, in the second place, you cannot tell—yet have no means of knowing—how the angel would have sworn if he had stood on dry ground as you do."

There was no flippancy or irreverence in Erskine's tone, and after a moment's reflection the stubborn witness yielded the point, impressed by the advocate's common sense view of the matter, and took the oath in the usual manner.

Do You Want to Know

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There is a growing sentiment in this country in favor of medicines of known composition. It is but natural that one should have some interest in the composition of that which he or she is expected to swallow, whether it be food, drink or medicine.

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This bold and outspoken movement on the part of Dr. Pierce, has, by showing exactly what his well-known medicines are composed of, completely disarmed all charging critics who have heretofore unjustly attacked them. A little pamphlet has been compiled, from the standard medical authorities of all the several schools of practice, showing the strongest endorsements by leading medical writers of the several ingredients which enter into Dr. Pierce's medicines. A copy of this little book is mailed free to any one desiring to learn more concerning the valuable, native, medicinal plants which enter into the composition of Dr. Pierce's medicines. Address Dr. Pierce as above.

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NOTICE OF SETTLEMENT.

Notice is hereby given that the accounts of the subscriber, executor of Julia E. Bliss, deceased, will be audited and stated by the Surrogate and reported for settlement to the Orphans' Court of Essex County, on Saturday, the 20th day of January next.

Dated December 8, 1904.

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September 30, 1904.

Pursuant to the order of GEORGE E. RUSSELL, Surrogate of the County of Essex, this day made, on the application of the undersigned executor of said deceased, notice is hereby given to the creditors of said deceased to exhibit to the subscriber under oath or affirmation their claims and demands against the estate of said deceased, within nine months from this date, or they will be forever barred from prosecuting or recovering the same against the subscriber.

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